



Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network (MCCPIN) is a statewide, 501c3 non-profit, provider volunteer association with the mission: *to support, promote, and strengthen the profession of licensed family childcare thereby enriching the lives of providers, children, families, and communities.*

February 9, 2023

HF1277 Early learning scholarships program changes made, and money appropriated.

Mr. Chair & Committee members.

My name is Cyndi Cunningham. I have been a Licensed Family Child Care Provider in St. Paul for 26 years and am the current Public Policy Board chairperson for Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network (MCCPIN), the 501c3 statewide association for Licensed Child Care Providers.

I am testifying on behalf of MCCPIN in support of HF1277 for continued, increased, and broadening funding for Early Learner Scholarships.

Investing in our youngest has been shown through many studies to be a critical step to increase brain development and close gaps in education accomplishments. The **investment return model** in our youngest, as reported by the Federal Reserve Board, is **greatest seen at the lowest socio-economic levels**, not at all socio-economic levels. Investing in those who have the least brings them into a level playing field and enriches the family and the child to support improved brain development.

Children develop to their best self when served in a setting which is a **'best fit' as defined by their family**, not an organization or business. ELS funded directly to the family empowers them to make this choice.

Allocating funds directly to families through ELS, vs institutions, empower them to make the best choice for their child/family. Work schedules, economics, child needs to develop to full capabilities, family values etc. are all a part of the complexities of young families.

Licensed Family Child Care is a best fit for many families as we embrace the full family, have responsive programs to the child/family/cultural needs and most critically provide **continuity of care**. We are the primary care giver every day, year in and year out. Families know who is caring for their children and build a direct relationship with the caregiver.

The increase and broadening of ELS and directly funding the family will allow families to access more LFCC settings and give more choice.

Increasing and broadening the funding of Early Learning Scholarships directly to the child/family is critical to ensure that the youngest and most disadvantaged receive the support to succeed to their full potential.

Please support HF1277.

Cyndi Cunningham, MCCPIN Public Policy Chairperson